

Te Anau – Milford Highway

A journey into the heart of Fiordland National Park

The journey starts in Te Anau and ends in the world famous fiord of Milford Sound/Piopiotahi, a memorable 120 km journey into the heart of Fiordland National Park and Te Wāhīpounamu – South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area.

- Te Anau**, start your journey here!
Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre
Get up-to-date information about the exciting journey you are about to take into New Zealand's largest national park. That way you won't miss the best bits!
- Henry Creek** (23 km from Te Anau)
- Lake Mistletoe** (45 min return)
Suitable for all ages, this track leads you through forest to peaceful Lake Mistletoe, a perfect spot for a family picnic.
- Te Anau Downs** (28 km from Te Anau)
Departure point for the Milford Track and a great spot for viewing the Murchison Mountains, home of the takahē.
- Te Anau Downs Historic Site**
A historically significant site with information panels telling the history of pioneer farmers in Fiordland.
- Walker Creek** (47 km from Te Anau)
- Totara** (50 km from Te Anau)
- Mackay Creek** (51 km from Te Anau)
- Eglinton valley** (52 km from Te Anau)
See the information panels describing the geology and history of the valley.
- Mirror Lakes** (56 km from Te Anau) (10 min)
Small tarns (mountain lakes) on the roadside provide outstanding reflective views of the Earl Mountains – a good place to stretch your legs.
- Deer Flat** (59 km from Te Anau)
Somewhere between here and Knobs Flat you will cross latitude 45° South.
- Knobs Flat** (62 km from Te Anau)
Display panels show the effect of avalanches on the Milford Road and provide information on the wildlife of the Eglinton valley. The last flush toilets before Milford Sound. Accommodation is available.
- Kiosk Creek** (63 km from Te Anau)
- Upper Eglinton** (68 km from Te Anau)
- Cascade Creek** (45 min return)
From here you can access the Lake Gunn Nature Walk, an easy loop walk that provides an introduction to tall red beech/tawhairaunui forest and birdlife of the Eglinton valley. Side trips can be made to lake beaches and sheltered fishing spots.



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- 16. Lake Gunn** (79 km from Te Anau)  
- 17. The Divide** (83 km from Te Anau)  
This, the lowest east-west pass in the Southern Alps/ Kā Tiritiri o te Moana (531 m), marks the start of the Routeburn, Caples and Greenstone Tracks. From here the road becomes windy and narrow in places – take extra care.
- 18. Key Summit – Routeburn Track** (3 hr return)  
The track starts at The Divide car park and follows the Routeburn Track for about an hour. It then branches off on a 20 min climb to Key Summit for spectacular views of Fiordland National Park. If the weather is fine, this track is well worth the effort!
- 19. Lake Howden – Routeburn Track** (3 hr return)  
From The Divide car park follow the Routeburn Track to the Key Summit turn off (see above). From here it is a short descent to Lake Howden. Return the same way. Add another hour if combining with the Key Summit walk.
- 20. Pops View** (85 km from Te Anau)  
Stop here on your return trip for stunning views of the Hollyford Valley.
- 21. Marian Corner** (87 km from Te Anau) 
Avalanche gates at Marian Corner are closed whenever there is avalanche danger to motorists.
- 22. Lake Marian** (3 hr 30 min return)  
The car park is 1 km down the unsealed Hollyford Road. Cross the swing bridge and continue for 10 min to the spectacular series of waterfalls. From here it is a 1 hr 30 min ascent to this beautiful alpine lake situated in a hanging valley.
- 23. Humboldt Falls** (30 min return) 
A well-graded track takes you on a short climb through rainforest to the lookout of these impressive falls.
- 24. Monkey Creek** (93 km from Te Anau)  
A pull-over area where you have a good chance of spotting whio/blue duck and kea.
- 25. Gertrude Saddle** (4–6 hr return) 
High-level tramping and navigation skills and experience, and a head for heights, are essential. Wet weather, snow or ice create treacherous conditions all year.
- 26. Homer Tunnel** (99 km from Te Anau) 
The Homer Tunnel, at an altitude of 945 m above sea level, pierces the sheer rock to allow road access to Milford Sound. The completion of the tunnel in 1953, (1.2 km) was an extraordinary achievement. Traffic lights over peak periods in summer months control traffic flows through the tunnel and can create delays of up to 20 min.
- 27. The Chasm** (110 km from Te Anau) (20 min return)   
Dramatic views of a series of powerful waterfalls. The sheer velocity of water gives an appreciation of how much rainfall the Milford Sound area receives per annum.
- 28. Tutoko Suspension Bridge** (116 km from Te Anau) 
Built in 1940 to cross the Tutoko River, this suspension bridge completed the road into Milford Sound/Piopiotahi. Information panels here describe its colourful history.
- 29. Milford Sound/Piopiotahi** (120 km from Te Anau)   
Milford Sound Visitor Terminal
The departure point for all cruises is a 10-min walk from the car park, via a covered walkway.

Piopiotahi Milford Foreshore Walk (30 min)   
At the entrance to the main visitor car park at Milford Sound you will find the start of this walk, an easy stroll along the shoreline.

Piopiotahi Milford Lookout Walk (10 min) 
Access to this track is from the car park area at the rear of the cafe. There are a number of steps up to the lookout, which gives impressive views of spectacular Milford Sound/Piopiotahi. Return the same way.
- 30. Piopiotahi (Milford Sound) Marine Reserve**
One of the most popular places in Fiordland to dive and see the black corals for which the fiords are famous.

TIPS FOR TRAVELLERS

Plan your trip

- The journey from Te Anau to Milford Sound takes at least 2 hr 15 min driving, without allowing for stops. Parking is limited: allow time to park your vehicle.
- Parking fees apply for vehicles in the parking areas near the Milford Sound boat terminal. Free parking is available via a beautiful 20-minute walk along the foreshore from the boat terminal.
- Allow for delays at the Homer Tunnel and other areas along the highway.
- There are no fuel stops or stations between Te Anau and Milford Sound/Piopiotahi (240 km return) – fill before you go!
- Leave the pets at home – remember you are entering a national park.

Safety

- If you are holding up other travellers, pull over at a safe site and allow traffic to pass.
- Park considerately and be aware of pedestrians.
- Taking a coach tour can relieve the stress of driving an unfamiliar road, and get you to your boat cruise connection on time.

- You may want to pack insect repellent – there are a few hungry sandflies in Milford Sound/Piopiotahi.
- Bring warm and waterproof layers of clothes so you can best enjoy your walks and boat cruise.
- If you are lucky enough to see kea, please don't feed them.
- There is no mobile phone coverage along the Milford Road.
- Tracks can be affected by closures following weather events so be sure to check the track alerts on the DOC website or talk to the local visitor centre for the latest track information.
- For the latest road condition information, visit www.milfordroad.co.nz or 0800 4 HIGHWAYS (0800 444 449).

In the winter

- Obey the 'Avalanche Area No Stopping' signs.
- Between May and November, when required (as indicated by signs), all vehicles on the Milford Road must carry or fit snow chains.
- Chains can be hired in Te Anau at any of the local service (petrol) stations.